

1999

A look at adoption through young adult fiction

Suzanne K. Duneman
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1999 Suzanne K. Duneman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>

Recommended Citation

Duneman, Suzanne K., "A look at adoption through young adult fiction" (1999). *Graduate Research Papers*. 1971.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1971>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

A look at adoption through young adult fiction

Find Additional Related Research in UNI ScholarWorks

To find related research in UNI ScholarWorks, go to the collection of [School Library Studies Graduate Research Papers](#) written by students in the [Division of School Library Studies](#), Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, at the University of Northern Iowa.

Abstract

This content analysis study examines adoptees and their families in nineteen young adult novels. An analysis was made of the adoptees sense of identity, the decision to search for their birth families, and their familial relationships. Sixty-three percent of the adoptees speculated about their birth families. Fifty-three percent of the characters did search for their birth families. Of that group, ninety percent had doubts during the search. In the conclusion of the novels sixty-three percent continued to have a relationship with both their adoptive and birth families, and thirty-seven percent maintained a relationship with only their adoptive family.

**A Look at Adoption
Through Young Adult Fiction**

**A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the Division of School-Library
Media Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts**

**by
Suzanne K. Duneman**

This research paper by: Suzanne Duneman
Titled: A Look at Adoption through Young Adult Fiction

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts.

June 8, 1999
Date approved

Marjorie L. Pappas
Graduate Faculty Reader

June 8, 1999
Date approved

Barbara R. Safford
Graduate Faculty Reader *DD*

June 8, 1999
Date approved

Rick C. Traw
Head, Department of Curriculum & Instruction

ABSTRACT

This content analysis study examines adoptees and their families in nineteen young adult novels. An analysis was made of the adoptees sense of identity, the decision to search for their birth families, and their familial relationships. Sixty-three percent of the adoptees speculated about their birth families. Fifty-three percent of the characters did search for their birth families. Of that group, ninety percent had doubts during the search. In the conclusion of the novels sixty-three percent continued to have a relationship with both their adoptive and birth families, and thirty-seven percent maintained a relationship with only their adoptive family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	vi
Chapter	
I Introduction	1
Statement of the problem	5
Hypotheses	5
Assumptions	6
Limitations	6
Definition of terms	7
II Review of the literature	9
Interpersonal relationships	9
Search for identity	13
III Methodology	17
Research design	17
Population	18
Instrumentation	19
Procedure	19
IV Data analysis	20

V	Conclusions	24
	Physical appearance	24
	The search	25
	The reunion	28
	Recommendations	29
	Summary	30
	Bibliography	31
	Appendices	
A	Data gathering instrument	34
B	Data collected	36
C	Books used in study	74

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Adoptee's self-perception and search	20
2. Adoptee's relationships	22

Dedicated to my parents,
Galen & Eva
Duneman

In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage. To know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life, there is the most disquieting loneliness.

- Alex Haley
Roots

CHAPTER I

Introduction

There are about 60,000 children adopted annually in the United States. (Stone, 1995) Adoption has recently become a pivotal issue in the media; as a cure for social problems and as a legal battle between birth parents and adoptive parents.

(Waldman & Caplan, 1994) The importance of this subject is also reflected through literature. By examining the young adult books about adoptees and their families, an interpretation of the relationship between adoptees, their adoptive family, and their birth families can be seen. This fictitious picture can then be balanced against the reality of adoption and the adoptee's search for identity.

In ancient times adoption was used to ensure an heir or to pass on the family name. The written history of adoption can be traced back to ancient Babylonia, in the year 1775 B.C. The Code of Hammurabi addressed the laws of adoption for both the adoptive parents and the birth parents, it ensured that it was permanent and restricted the birth parents from

claiming the child or the adoptive parents from returning the child. These laws are similar to the adoption laws of today. Adoption codes can also be seen in the “histories of ancient Assyria, Greece, Egypt, and Rome”. (Scott, 1980, p. 6) One of the most famous adoptees in history was Moses, who was claimed by Pharaohs daughter when she found him floating in a basket on the river.

In more recent times, the adoption process has alternated between the open disclosure of adoptive information and the closed adoption, cloaked in secrecy. In the early part of this century, it was common to give adoptive parents family information about their adopted children. The adoptees often already knew the information, because most were adopted at an older age and had memories of their birth families. It was also important for the adoptive parents to be aware of any hereditary illnesses in the birth family, so they could understand the situation. (Carp, 1995)

Recent restriction of information began in the 1950s. Part of the reason was to “protect adopted children from social stigma and partly to accommodate adoptive parents’

reluctance to discuss the matter with their children". (Carp, 1995, p. 219) The focus was to assimilate the adoptee completely into the family. Since the late 1960's, the pendulum has swung again in the direction of open disclosure and communication between the adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptee. (Carp, 1995)

As the importance of this subject has grown, through the interest of the media in high profile cases such as Baby Richard and Baby Jessica, more and more information can be found about the individuals involved in the adoption process. (Diamant, 1994) Adoptive parents feel the effect of the "messages, both pre- and post-adoption, that are being bombarded at all of us on a daily basis." (Bartholet et al., 1994, p. 1059) Most recently, literature has appeared that addresses the birth mother experience. (Jones, 1993) The birth mother experience tells the story of the woman giving the child up for adoption, her feelings before, during, and after the adoption. But in the adoption triangle, the adoptee is often ignored. (Gibbs, 1993)

For the adoptee, part of the adoption process is the

searching for his/her true identity. In the Schechter and Brodzinsky book, they have structured the psychological adjustment of adoptees as a parallel to Erik Erikson's seven-stage model of psycho-social tasks. The section regarding young adults combines Erikson's task of *Ego Identity* vs. *Identity Confusion* with tasks related to the adoptees search for identity.

- Further exploration of the meaning and implications of being adopted.
- Connecting adoption to one's sense of identity.
- Coping with racial identity in cases of interracial adoption.
- Coping with physical differences from family members.
- Resolving the family romance fantasy.
- Coping with adoption-related loss, especially as it relates to the sense of self.
- Considering the possibility of searching for biological family. (Brodzinsky, 1992, p. 16)

Young adulthood is traditionally a period in a person's life when he/she begin to pull away from his/her families and

explore their own personality. This issue is further complicated for an adopted teenager because he/she has a family that he/she has never met. This age is traditionally when he/she examine the reasons that he/she were given up for adoption and the questions about his/her birth families that have never been answered. (Brodzinsky, 1992, p. 18)

Statement of the Problem

An analysis of young adult adoption literature shows the realities of adoption and its fictional portrayal in books. Do the effects of adoption on the adoptee, the adoptive family, and the birth parents that is shown in literature accurately illustrate reality?

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses have been formulated for this study.

1. Fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters have at least one incident of speculation about their birth families.

2. Fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters will search for their birth parents.
3. Fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters will find occasions in their search when they have doubts about the search.
4. Fifty-one percent or more of the reunions will lead to a relationship between the birth family, the adopted family, and the adoptee.

Assumptions

The assumption of this research is the ability of the researcher to identify and gain access to young adult fiction books about adoption.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is related to access. The books will be borrowed from various libraries around the state of Iowa and may not be available. Another limitation is the number of books that fit the criteria. They need to be from the point of view of the adoptee, written for young adults ages

twelve through nineteen, set in the United States, and published between the years 1980-1998. A personal limitation is the subjectivity of the author's view of adoption, especially in the interpretation of the literature and the completion of the checklists.

Definition of Terms

Adoption terms are ambiguous and not easily defined, but these are the definitions used for this research paper.

Adoption: "legal process through which parental rights are transferred from the birth parents to the adoptive parents." (Triadoption, p. 4)

Adoptee: "one that is adopted." (Merriam-Webster, 1993, p. 16)

Birth parent: the biological parent(s) who "surrenders a child for adoption". (Gediman & Brown, 1989, p. xix)

Adoptive parents: "the people who have legally assumed parental rights and responsibilities of the child." (Triadoption, p. 4)

Disclosure: “the act of telling the child he/she is adopted.” (Griffith, 1985, p. 6)

Search: the process in which the adoptee looks for his/her birth parent(s).

Stages of searching: stages that an adoptee journeys through in the search process. The threshold is the beginning of the search. In the obsession stage the adoptee can think of little else. There is a stage of limbo where the adoptee questions continuing the search. Reunion, the final stage, is the meeting of the birth parents. (Lifton, 1979)

Reunion: “a reuniting of persons after separation.”
(Merriam-Webster, 1993, p. 1002)

Adolescents: young adults between the ages of twelve and nineteen.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The research regarding adoption has often focused on the interpersonal relationships within adoptive families and the adoptees' search for identity. Less has been written from the adoptees' point of view. An example of this can be seen in interviews with adoptees.

The thing that bothers me is that nobody ever listens to the kids - to their feelings. It's always the birth parents, the adoptive parents, and the adoptees over eighteen who do all the talking. People think that kids under eighteen aren't mature enough to understand their own feelings. (Krementz, 1982, p. 28)

Interpersonal Relationships

A large percentage of adoption research has been done on the interpersonal relationships among adoptive family members. A study by Sobol, Delaney, and Earn (1994) compared the family relationships of adoptive and non adoptive families. "The participants of this study were 35 female adoptees, 47

female non adoptees, 13 male adoptees, and 25 male non adoptees.” (Sobol et al., 1994, p. 288) The research was accomplished through a combination of questionnaires and tasks to measure family dynamics. The goal of the research was to compare the relations of adopted teenagers and their parents to those of non adopted teens. This was accomplished through the examination of the young adult adoptee’s memories of their adoptive family relationships, and hypothesized that these remembrances would illustrate the same ideas about adoption that are presented in literature produced for parenting. Most literature for parents indicates that the

fathers would be recalled as being disengaged from the family during the preschool years, mothers would be enmeshed with their adoptive children during the same time period, and adoptees would be more estranged from their families during adolescence than they would at any other time as a result of conflicts around identity issues. (Sobol et al., 1994, p. 397)

The research study called for volunteers to complete tasks that would measure how they remembered their family

structure during different developmental periods. One of their tasks consisted of drawing circles to represent their family structure during different times of their lives. Four age groupings were established: 0-6 years, 7-12 years, 13-18 years, and the present.

The results showed that fathers were not detached during the the preschool years, mothers were not overly involved during the early years of their adopted child, and adopted children were not estranged from their families during their adolescence. The adoptive families, in reality, were not like their representations in parent literature. They proved to be more "cohesive and adaptable" than the non adoptive families. (Sobol et al., 1994, p. 385)

In related research by Grotevant, McRoy, Elde, and Fravel (1994) the effect of openness on adoption on family dynamics was studied. This research was conducted through questionnaires and interviews with each member of the selected families. Three levels of openness in adoption were measured: confidential - little or no contact between birth and adoptive families, mediated - information shared but no direct

contact, and fully disclosed - direct communication between the families and openly shared information. The population for this study included 190 adoptive mothers and fathers from 15 states with at least one adoptive child, and 169 birth mothers. Of these adoptions there were 62 confidential, 69 mediated, and 59 fully disclosed adoptions.

The families filled out questionnaires and were interviewed by a team of two. Ten adoption variables were examined from the interview process. The first five variables concentrated on matters of communication, four dealt with the openness of the adoption, and the last was the ability of the adoptive parent to express his/her philosophy of adoption. Then correlations were calculated between the adoption interview ratings and background variables. The conclusions reached in this study were that in all adoptions the adoptive parents felt confident in their roles and most were satisfied with their control of the relations with the birth mother. There was also a strong pattern that people in open adoptions had more sympathy for the birth parents, little fear of the birth mother, higher levels of acceptance in the adoption, and a

stronger permanence in the relationship. (Grotevant et al, 1994)

Search for Identity

Some research studies have focused on the adoptees and their search for identity, either in their adoptive or birth families. One example of this is Lahti's study (1993) that explored the mental health and the identity development of adoptees. The sample was comprised of ninety adolescents and their families. The goal "was to explore the mental health and development of identity of the adopted child in adolescence". (Lahti, 1993, p. 68)

The results showed that fifty percent of the adolescents had a sufficiently developed sense of identity. The remaining percentages were split, with twenty percent having a varying identity, nine percent afflicted with an identity crisis, and another twenty percent having a distinct identity disorder. In the study no difference could be seen between male and female, the atmosphere of the adoptive home, or social class. Although there was no conclusive evidence as to the effects of an early separation from the birth family, an association was

made. "Moving from the biological mother to the adoptive home as soon as possible was best for the child in terms of his/her mental health." (Lahti, 1993, p. 70) This study summarized that adoptive children have lost one family before coming to their adoptive homes and that this must be accepted and internalized before the adoptee finds her/his identity.

The review of research studies about searching for birth families by Schechter and Bertocci (1990) talks about how the adoptee's link to their adoptive family can create dilemmas. Until recently an adoptee was expected to have a relationship with their real adoptive family and have an anonymous birth family. Research has shown a variety of reasons for searching. Some adoptees look for their birth parents because they have an unsatisfactory relationship with their adoptive parents. Another reason cited is the curiosity of birth family relationships, finding someone that looks like them. When asked about their reasons for searching, common phrases the adoptees expressed were "not feeling 'whole' or 'connected'". (Schechter & Bertocci, 1990, p. 69)

A research study that surveyed the reunions between

adoptees and their birth parents was conducted from the adoptive parents viewpoint. The researchers mailed questionnaires to adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees who had recent reunions. The forms were distributed by adoption reform organizations. Of the surveys distributed, thirty families responded, representing thirty-two children. The study found distinct differences on how the families reacted to the reunions. The responses reflected the parents ability to maintain open discussions about adoption, with both their children and the birth parents.

“Three types of family responses are identified:

(1) closed, (2) divided, and (3) open. Acceptance of the differences between families created by adoption of children and those created by childbirth was a factor in the families’ openness.” (Silverman, Campbell, & Patti, 1994, p. 542)

The different responses were seen to represent the family’s need to put boundaries and structure to their family group.

In summary, the interpersonal relationships in adoptive families are not any more or less dysfunctional than any other

type of families.. Families that were involved in open or partially open adoptions were more cohesive and resilient than families in closed adoption situations. This was evident in studies that examined reunions between adoptees and their birth families. An adoptee's search for identity can be seen through the relationship to his/her adoptive family and the decision to search for his/her birth parents. This is often related to the level of openness in the adoption. In an open adoption, the search and/or reunion with biological families had little or no effect on the relationship between the adopted child and his/her adopted family.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Adoption is a creation of our society, dating back thousands of years. As with most of humankind's creations, it has problems. The problems associated with adoption are interpersonal relationships within adoptive families and the adoptee's search for identity. This struggle is mirrored in fictional literature, but does it accurately illustrate reality?

Research Design

The methodology of this research will be a content analysis of the young adult fiction books on the subject of adoption, from the adoptees point of view. Content analysis is "an objective, systematic, and quantitative method of describing literature. The investigator can move away from subjective opinions based on recollections of individual titles to an objective description of the contents of a systematically selected group of books". (Bekkedal, 1973, p. 110)

The analysis of content in literature can be divided into three categories : looking at the relationships portrayed in

books, looking at the cultural message in books, and the characterization of certain groups in books. Of these three types, this research will focus on the cultural message through the experiences of adoptees and their families that are described in young adult literature and examine it in the light of what research has shown are the realities of adoptive family relations.

Population

The young adult literature examined for this study will be identified from the books available through the Iowa Locator system. The Iowa Locator is a state-wide on-line system that indexes books available in Iowa's college, university, public, and school libraries. The words ADOPTION and FICTION will be the search terms used. In addition the terms will be searched in the 13th and supplemental editions of the Wilson Junior High Catalog and Senior High Catalog, these are catalogs of books suitable for junior and senior high school libraries. These resources will also be used to confirm that the fiction books chosen are for age levels twelve through nineteen. This will ensure that it is relevant for young adults.

The selection will be limited to young adult books about adoption in the United States published between the years of 1980 and 1998. The limitations put on the years of publication will assure that the study is current.

Instrumentation

The data gathered from the books will be collected using a checklist. The data instrument will include items about the adoptee: name, age, sex, ethnic group, siblings, age at adoption, disclosure of adoption age, questions about the relationship of the adoptee to their adoptive family, any search for the birth family, reunion with the birth family, and the conclusion of the story. Similar information will be gathered about both the adoptive and birth parents in the story. (see Appendix A)

Procedure

This study will be conducted through the reading of the book titles in the sample. The data gathering instrument will be completed for each title; recording the adoptees family relations with his/her adoptive family, his/her decision to search, and the relationship with his/her birth parents.

CHAPTER IV

Data Analysis

The data for this study was collected from the nineteen books examined. Each book met the selection criteria for this research. A data gathering instrument was used to analyze the books. The information gathered was then used to support or reject the hypotheses. The checklist for each title read are located in Appendix B.

Table I summarizes the data for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are concerned with the adoptees' feelings about themselves and their decision to search for their birth families. The adoptees' who do decide to search and have doubts during their search are discussed in hypothesis 3.

	YES	NO	PERCENT
Wonder/physical appearance	12	7	63%
Search for birth parents	10	9	53%
Doubts about search (of the 10)	9	1	90%

Hypothesis 1 was fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters will have at least one incident of speculation about their birth families. This was tested by question number eight on the checklist, did the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family? Of the nineteen characters twelve demonstrated speculation and seven did not, for a percentage of 63. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 stated that fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters will search for their birth parents. This hypothesis was tested by question nine on the checklist, does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family? Ten of the nineteen characters did search for their birth families and nine did not, for a percentage of 53. Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 stipulated that fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters will find occasions in their search when they have doubts about the search. This hypothesis was tested by question number ten on the checklist, does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search? Of the ten characters who searched for their birth

families, nine had doubts about the search and one did not, for a percentage of 90. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 2 illustrates the data concerning Hypothesis 4, regarding the relationship established by the adoptee to his/her adoptive family, birth family, both, or neither.

	NUMBER	PERCENT
Adopted family only	7	37%
Birth family only	0	0%
Both families	12	63%
Neither family	0	0%
TOTALS	19	100%

Hypothesis 4 was fifty-one percent or more of the reunions will lead to a relationship between the birth family, the adopted family, and the adoptee. Evidence for this was tested in question thirteen, it asks with which family members does the adoptee maintain a relationship? Twelve of the nineteen characters continued to have a relationship with both their adoptive and birth families, for a percentage of 63.

Seven of the nineteen adoptees maintained a relationship with only their adoptive family, for a percentage of 37. Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to compare the realities of adoption and its fictional portrayal in books. The characters in the books studied ranged in age from 12 to 18, with an average age of 14.6. Fifteen of the nineteen characters were female. All but two were adopted before they were six months old.

Physical Appearance

The researcher proposed that the adopted characters will have at least one incident of speculation about their birth families. In real life, adoptees often wonder about their appearance. Young adults often wonder about who they are, but adoptees have to answer other questions about their identity before they search for their place in the world. They have to contend with physical differences from their adoptive family.

This concept was reinforced in the young adult literature about adoption. In the book Why Me? Rachel heard some of her older relatives talking about her younger sister Phoebe, who

had just been born. "Who do you think she [Phoebe] takes after? And it would hit me with a little jolt that, as long as I lived, nobody was ever going to ask that question about me." (Kent, 1992, p. 12) Cassandra, a character in the book Cassandra Robbins. Esq., was a racially mixed child adopted by a white family. One Sunday in church she saw a racially mixed couple with a small daughter. This lead her to speculate about her birth family. "If my natural parents had not been teenagers and had stayed together, that could have been me..." (Viglucci, 1987, p. 55) This disconnection with their adoptive families lead adoptees to imagine what their birth families look like.

The Search

The researcher hypothesized that more than fifty percent of the adopted characters will search for their birth parents. While there are no accurate statistics on the number of adoptees that search for their birth families, the flood of new services, support groups, and Internet sites dedicated to reuniting families is an indication of the importance of this topic. Of the nineteen characters studied, 53% did search for

their birth families.

The need for the answers that a search gives can be seen in the book Mother, Help Me Live. The character Sarah has questions about her birth family and why the adoption occurred. "Every time I look in the mirror, I wonder, Who am I? Where did I come from? Why was I given away?" (McDaniel, 1992, p. 47) The search for birth parents can also answer some of the adoptees questions about themselves. Sally, a character in the book The Searching Heart, wants to search to answer questions about herself. "You see, I really can't know myself if I don't know my real parents." (Aks, 1983, p. 15) Many adoptees feel guilt about their curiosity, like Molly in Molly By Any Other Name. "Why did she feel so damn guilty?" (Okimoto, 1990, p. 7)

This phenomena could be fading away if adoptions become more open. While none of the books studied had open adoptions, three were mediated. These three books also had the most recent copyright dates: Heaven (1995), Second Best (1997), and Double Play at Short (1998).

Related to this is the doubt about searching at all. This

study theorized that fifty-one percent or more of the adopted characters will have doubts about their search. Of the ten characters who did search, nine had doubts during the search. These doubts are understandable because of the upheaval the search causes. Most adoptive parents are opposed to their child searching for another family. Some go as far as refusing to assist or demanding that the search stop. This puts pressure on the adoptee. Should he/she find a birth family that gave him/her away in the first place?

An example of this can be seen in Tessa, a character in the book Second Best. "That she was such a loser her own mother had given her away..." (Lanham, 1997, p. 35) Barry presents to us another aspect in the book Visiting Miss Pierce. "What kind of people give babies away?" (Derby, 1986, p. 119) The feelings that follow these doubts are shown by Marley in the book Heaven. "Do you think Jack would have kept me if I was beautiful?" (Johnson, 1998, p. 74) The doubts that these adoptees feel are a part of their search, to find their birth families and themselves.

The Reunion

The researcher proposed that more than fifty-one percent or more of the reunions will lead to a relationship between the birth family, the adopted family, and the adoptee. Of the ten characters who searched for their birth families, only one did not continue a relationship with their birth parent. Sarah, in the book Mother, Help Me Live, searches for her birthmother because she is dying of leukemia and needs a bone marrow transplant. Her adoptive parents help her hire a private detective to locate Janelle, Sarah's birthmother. Janelle does not want to be found and reluctantly talks to Sarah and her mother. Janelle cannot help because she has had cancer herself. Sarah is glad that she met her birthmother, but does not maintain a relationship with Janelle.

In all, twelve of the nineteen characters did maintain a relationship with both their adoptive and birth families. Some of the characters that did not search did find their birth families by other means. Tessa, in the book Second Best, had her adoptive parents contact her birth mother without her knowledge. The character Marley had an unusual situation in

the book Heaven, her birthfather was also her uncle and was in contact with her since the adoption. Two characters did not search and were contacted by their birthmother, T.J. in the book Secrets and Julie in the book The Queen of Dreamland.

Recommendations

Further study is needed in this area of adoption literature. The following are recommendations:

1. Similar studies should be done to examine the picture books about adoption and the reality of the message they present to young children.
2. Studies into books for grades three through six should also be performed to see if results comparable to this study are found.
3. Studies concerning books about birthmothers and fathers, teenage girls who give up their babies for adoption and the involvement of their boyfriends.
4. Studies should be completed on books from other countries, to compare the data from different cultures.

Summary

The objective of this content analysis was to complete an analysis of young adult adoption literature. Would the reality of adoption show through to its fictional portrayal in books. The presumption was that the adopted characters would speculate about their birth families; the adopted characters would search for their birth parents; have doubts about searching; have a relationship with their adoptive and birth families.

All the novels had to meet specific criteria to fit the research. Each of the books was recorded on a data gathering instrument. The instrument searched for basic demographic information, details about each of the presumptions, and quotes to support the information.

All four hypotheses were accepted. The characterization of adopted teens in young adult novels does conform to the reality of adoption in the United States.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartholet, E., Draper, E., Resnik, J., & Geller, L. (1994). Rethinking the choice to have children: when, how, and whether or not bear children. American Behavioral Scientist, 37, (8), 1058-1073.
- Bekkedal, T. K. (1973). Content analysis of children's books. Library Trends, 109-125.
- Brodzinsky, D. M., Schechter, M. D., & Henig, R. (1992). Being adopted : the lifelong search for self New York: Doubleday.
- Carp, E. W. (1995, January-February). Adoption and disclosure of family information: a historical perspective. Child Welfare, 74, (1), 217-239.
- Diamant, A. (1994, January). Is it safe to adopt a child? McCall's, 96-100, 148-150.
- Gediman, J. S., & Brown, L. P. (1989). Birth bond: reunions between birthparents and adoptees - what happens after... Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press.
- Gibbs, N. (1993, July 19). In whose best interest? Time, 142, (3), 44-50.

Griffith, M. (1985). A content analysis of books depicting adopted teenagers in adolescent novels published between 1965-1981. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Grotevant, H. D., McRoy, R. G., Elde, C. L., & Fravel, D. L. (1994). Adoptive family system dynamics: variations by level of openness in the adoption. Family Process, 33, (2), 125-146.

Jones, M. B. (1993). Birthmothers: women who have relinquished babies for adoption tell their stories. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press.

Krementz, J. (1982). How it feels to be adopted. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Lahti, I. (1993). An adopted child in adolescence : a psychiatric study of adopted adolescents and their families. Psychiatria Fennica, 24, 67-74.

Lifton, B. J. (1979). Lost and found. New York: Dial Press.

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. (10th ed.) (1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Schechter, M. D., & Bertocci, D. (1990). The meaning of the search. In D. M. Brodzinsky & M. D. Schechter (Eds.), The psychology of adoption (pp. 62-90). New York: Oxford University Press.

Scott, E. (1980). Adoption New York: Franklin Watts.

Silverman, P. R., Campbell L., & Patti P. (1994). Reunions between adoptees and birth parents: the adoptive parents' view. Social Work, 39, 542-549.

Sobol, M. P., Delaney, S., & Earn, B. M. (1994). Adoptees' portrayal of the development of family structure. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 23, (3), 385-401.

Stone, A. (1995, June 12). Finding a way through the adoption maze. Business Week, 104-105.

Triadoption library. (n.d.). Westminster, CA: Westminster Community Services Center.

Waldman, S., & Caplan, L. (1994, March 21). The politics of adoption. Newsweek, 73, (12), 64-65.

Appendix A**DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT**

Title

Author

Publisher

Copyright Date

1. Name of adoptee
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
3. Age of adoptee
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male _____ Female
5. Age at time of adoption
6. Openness level of the adoption
_____ closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes _____ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
_____ yes _____ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
_____ yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
_____ yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
_____ adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
_____ both families
_____ neither family

Appendix B

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - 7th Grade Soccer Star

Author - Gayle Roper

Publisher - Chariot Books

Copyright Date - 1988

1. Name of adoptee - Jason McCarver
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Harold & Ellie McCarver/adoptive parents, Matty/brother
3. Age of adoptee - 13
4. Gender of adoptee X Male Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
 mediated
 open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
 "But eventhough I knew I was adopted, I didn't talk about it outside the house. It made me feel too different, too odd, too uncomfortable." p. 15 "Sometimes I felt so disconnected from this family." p. 15 "I'd be an embarrassment to my [birth] mother..." p. 21 "Every kid had a birth story. Every kid but me." p. 56 "...problem was the adoption. I hated it!" p. 68

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☐ yes ☒ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☒ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☐ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Best Friends

Author - Molly Albright

Publisher - Troll Associates

Copyright Date - 1988

1. Name of adoptee - Missy Fremont

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Mr. & Mrs. Fremont/adoptive parents

3. Age of adoptee - 12

4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption

 X closed/confidential

 mediated

 open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?

"Missy sometimes wondered about the people who had given
her up." p. 9 "Why can't I be *normal* like the other kids?"

p. 60

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
 N/A yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
 N/A yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
 X adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
 X adopted family only
_____ birth family only
_____ both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Cassandra Robbins, Esq.

Author - Pat Costa Viglucci

Publisher - Square One Publishers

Copyright Date - 1987

1. Name of adoptee - Cassandra Robbins
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Mr. & Mrs. Robbins/adoptive parents, Todd/brother,
Sam/brother
3. Age of adoptee - 17
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?
"No one ever guesses he's adopted. Both he and Mom have this
thick, wavy dark brown hair." p. 16 "If my natural parents had
not been teenagers and had stayed together, that could have
been me..." p. 55 "But nobody completely understands what it's
like to be the different one." p. 152 "Who was I, anyway? ...
Where was I supposed to fit in?" p. 157

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☐ yes ☒ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☒ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☐ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Double Play at Short

Author - Matt Christopher

Publisher - Little, Brown & Company

Copyright Date - 1995

1. Name of adoptee - Danny Walker

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Mr. & Mrs. Walker/adoptive parents, Jennifer/sister
Tammy Aiken/birth sister

3. Age of adoptee - 12

4. Gender of adoptee X Male Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption
 closed/confidential
 X mediated
 open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?

"...the strange feelings he'd been having all game - that Tammy was somehow *familiar* to him." p. 71 "So why was he sniffing around outside of it, looking for information about someone he'd never even officially met?" p. 81 "The anguish in his voice cried out for an answer." p. 93

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
 X yes _____ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
_____ yes X no
11. Is the search successful?
 X yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
 X adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
 X both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Family Secrets

Author - Barbara Corcoran

Publisher - Atheneum

Copyright Date - 1992

1. Name of adoptee - Tracy Stewart

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee

Mr. & Mrs. John Stewart/adoptive parents, Alison/sister,
Arnold/brother, Richard/brother,
Felicia Shaw/birthmother (deceased),
Bertha/birth-cousin

3. Age of adoptee - 14

4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption

 X closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?

"You can't possibly know how I feel. You're not even related to me." p. 22 "They weren't my grandparents, Mom..." p. 26 "You get up in the morning one person, and you go to bed someone else." p. 27 "I was adopted. I'm not your sister." p. 49

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☐ yes ☒ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☒ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☐ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Gathering Home

Author - Vicki Covington

Publisher - Penguin Books

Copyright Date - 1990

1. Name of adoptee - Whitney Gaines

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee

Cal & Mary Ellen Gaines/adoptive parents

Sam Kirby/birthfather, Eva Kirby/birth grandmother

3. Age of adoptee - 18

4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption

 X closed/confidential

_____ mediated

_____ open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?

"Zorn. Your mother's last name.' A tingle of anticipation crept up on her, a feeling akin to excitement." p. 44 "She [birthmother] was studying theater-Whitney felt something inside when she read that. p. 46 "It made her wonder about Diana, her birthmother. Was she this way?" p. 82 "I don't feel like I know me very well either." p. 102 "Yet, their hands were not related, genetically." p. 155

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☐ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☒ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Heaven

Author - Angela Johnson

Publisher - Simon & Schuster

Copyright Date - 1998

1. Name of adoptee - Marley
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Kevin & Lucy/adoptive parents, Butchy/adoptive brother
Jack/uncle & birthfather
3. Age of adoptee - 14
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - 2 years
6. Openness level of the adoption
_____ closed/confidential
 X mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
"I didn't have a place anymore." p. 52 "Nothing belonged to me anymore." p. 53 "...looking at my hands and realizing that they weren't Momma's hands." p. 57 "Do you think Jack would have kept me if I was beautiful?" p. 74 "Making me want to know why..." p. 76 I look at Momma and want her to be mine, really mine. I feel bruised and motherless..." p. 86-87

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☐ yes ☒ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☐ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☐ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☐ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☒ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - The House in the Woods

Author - Isabelle Holland

Publisher - Fawcett Juniper

Copyright Date - 1991

1. Name of adoptee - Bridget Moorland
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Mr. Moorland/adoptive father, Marian & Liza/adoptive sisters, Morgan/adoptive brother, Patrick Bingham/birthfather, Rebecca Bingham/birth half-sister
3. Age of adoptee - 14
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - 2 years
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
 _____ mediated
 _____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
"There aren't many times lately I can forget that I'm adopted."
p. 2 "Sometimes it was hard for me to believe that both he and Mother wanted to adopt me." p. 38 "...making me feel like I don't belong." p. 45 "...I didn't belong in this family..." p. 73
"made me realize how much my being adopted made a difference..." p. 78

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
 X yes _____ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
 X yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
 X yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
 X adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
 X both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Jo's Search

Author - Paul Kropp

Publisher - Collier

Copyright Date - 1986

1. Name of adoptee - Jo (Josephine) Martin
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Jim & Kate Martin/adoptive parents
Katrina Markovic Novak/birthmother
3. Age of adoptee - 15
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
 _____ mediated
 _____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
"...she doesn't even know my real mother. Neither do I." p. 11
"Who am I?" p. 13 "Couldn't understand that finding my mother was part of finding myself?" p. 29 "...because I had wanted to get in touch with her and with myself. Didn't I have a right to my own past?" p. 74 "It was like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, but the puzzle was my life. Each piece made it more whole, more real." p. 76

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☐ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☒ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Molly By Any Other Name

Author - Jean Davies Okimoto

Publisher - Scholastic

Copyright Date - 1990

1. Name of adoptee - Molly Jane Fletcher
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Paul & Eleanor Fletcher/adoptive parents
Karen Matsuda/birthmother, Robbie/birth half-brother
3. Age of adoptee - 17
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
"Is it so wrong to want to know?" p. 16 "She stared into her own dark eyes. Who do I look like?" p. 17 "I don't know anything about who I am. Don't I have a right to know these things?" p. 25 "Because I always thought I had to be [perfect] or else I might get sent back." p. 43 "...being adopted made her feel like a 'throwaway' person, someone unwanted..." p. 73 "But it means everything in the world to me to know..." p. 253

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☐ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☒ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Most Precious Blood

Author - Susan Beth Pfeffer

Publisher - Bantam Books

Copyright Date - 1991

1. Name of adoptee - Val (Valentine) Castaldi
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Rick & Barbara Castaldi/adoptive parents,
Terry/adoptive cousin, Michelle/Terry's daughter
Carmela Primo/birthmother,
Sister Gina Marie/birthsister
3. Age of adoptee - 16
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
_____ closed/confidential
 X mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?
"It's just that I always knew who my parents were, and now I
don't know anything anymore." p. 64 "...she was completely
alone." p. 77 "But now she had no one..." p. 100 "...then who
am I?" p. 105 "But I'm not going to feel complete unless I see
her." p. 115 "I don't know who I am anymore..." p. 167

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
 X yes _____ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
 X yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
 X yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
 X adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
 X both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Mother, Help Me Live

Author - Lurlene McDaniel

Publisher - Bantam Books

Copyright Date - 1992

1. Name of adoptee - Sarah MacGreggor
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Patrick & Carol MacGreggor/adoptive parents,
Tina/sister, Richie/brother, Janelle Warren/birthmother
3. Age of adoptee - 15
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
 _____ mediated
 _____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
"I don't belong to either of you." p. 16 "Who was she? To whom did she belong?" p. 32 "Every time I look in the mirror, I wonder, Who am I? Where did I come from? Why was I given away?" p. 47 "Tina was the rightful daughter, while she was the daughter of a stranger." p. 56 "Somewhere out there," Sarah gestured, 'is my real family, whose blood and genes have been passed along to me.'" p. 68

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☒ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☐ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - The Queen of Dreamland

Author - Ingrid Tomez

Publisher - Atheneum

Copyright Date - 1996

1. Name of adoptee - Julie Solus

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Wayne & Mame Solus/adoptive parents, Loretta
Young/birthmother, Bagley Wonder/birth half-brother

3. Age of adoptee - 14

4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption

 X closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?

"Most of all, she wished she knew who Julianne Blanche Solus was." p. 9 "She had been abandoned, cast away, like a pebble on the beach, like a piece of litter, like any old rotten apple."

p. 25 "Loretta and only Loretta, she thought, could make her whole. Normal." p. 40 "The person who held the answers to the entire mystery of her being, who she'd dreamed about since she was old enough to remember her dreams." p. 161

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____X_____ yes _____ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
_____ yes _____X_____ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
_____N/A_____ yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
_____N/A_____ yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
_____X_____ adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
_____X_____ both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - The Searching Heart

Author - Patricia Aks

Publisher - Fawcett Juniper

Copyright Date - 1983

1. Name of adoptee - Sally Brighton
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
George & Lucy Brighton/adoptive parents,
Delores Gordon/birthmother, Ham Jr./birth half-brother
Abigail/birth half-sister
3. Age of adoptee - 15
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
 _____ mediated
 _____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
 is missing because of the adoption?
"For as long as I can remember, I've known I was adopted, but
lately that's all I can think about." p. 1 "... I really can't know
myself if I don't know my real parents." p. 15 "Again, I was
nagged by wanting to know where I came from, who I was, what
might have been." p. 49

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☐ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☒ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Second Best

Author - Cheryl Lanham

Publisher - Berkley Books

Copyright Date - 1997

1. Name of adoptee - Tessa Prescott
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Chuck & Lorna Prescott/adoptive parents,
Doreen Mercer/birthmother, Tammy Mercer/birthsister
3. Age of adoptee - 17
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 _____ closed/confidential
 X mediated
 _____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self' is missing because of the adoption?
 "...the woman who'd given her away." p. 2 "...like something had been missing all of her life..." p. 17 "...her own mother had given her away..." p. 35 "One part of her felt like she'd been dumped..." p. 52 "So you gave me away, ... Second best. Damaged goods. p. 66 "...feeling once again like she'd had a label that read WORTHLESS slapped on her forehead at birth, ..." p. 73 "...how to describe the cold emptiness..." p. 79

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no (parents)
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
 X yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
 X yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
 X adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
 X both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Secrets

Author - Alane Ferguson

Publisher - Simon & Schuster

Copyright Date - 1997

1. Name of adoptee - T.J. (James) Lancaster
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Taylor Lancaster/adoptive father,
Nancy Champion/birthmother, Londyn/birthsister
3. Age of adoptee - 12
4. Gender of adoptee X Male Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
 mediated
 open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?
"Everything you know about you is a lie. You are a lie." p. 34
"Still, there are a lot of things that won't line up in my brain."
p. 36 "I'm looking at my mother. I'm finally home." p. 38 "We
share blood. We're connected." p. 43

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
_____ yes X no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
 N/A yes _____ no
11. Is the search successful?
 N/A yes _____ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
 X adopted family _____ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
_____ adopted family only
_____ birth family only
 X both families
_____ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - A Special Kind of Love: Cedar River Daydreams #21

Author - Judy Baer

Publisher - Bethany House Publishers

Copyright Date - 1993

1. Name of adoptee - Jennifer Golden

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Mr. & Mrs. Golden/adoptive parents

3. Age of adoptee - 16

4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption

 X closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?

"I don't belong to them." p. 31 "I don't belong here. I'm not
part of this family." p. 32 "I don't know who I am anymore."
p. 32 "Who am I, do you think?" p. 33 "I don't know who I can
count on anymore." p. 39

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☐ yes ☒ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☒ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☐ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Visiting Miss Pierce

Author - Pat Derby

Publisher - Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Copyright Date - 1986

1. Name of adoptee - Barry Wilson

2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Bill & Anna Wilson/adoptive parents

3. Age of adoptee -14

4. Gender of adoptee X Male Female

5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months

6. Openness level of the adoption

 X closed/confidential
 mediated
 open/fully disclosed

7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?

"...and since I was legally adopted, I decided my parents were stuck with me." p. 4 "...Willie was about to introduce me to my real father..." (dream) p. 69 "...I do some daydreaming about who my parents are and what they are like..." p. 76 "What kind of people give babies away?" p. 119 "...they had given me away." p. 120 "But even my curiosity made me feel disloyal." p. 125

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☐ yes ☒ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ N/A yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☒ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☐ both families
☐ neither family

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Title - Why Me?

Author - Deborah Kent

Publisher - Scholastic

Copyright Date - 1992

1. Name of adoptee - Rachel Whitaker
2. Family members and their relationship to adoptee
Tom & Linda Whitaker/adoptive parents, Phoebe/sister,
Vera Stasic/birthmother
3. Age of adoptee - 13
4. Gender of adoptee _____ Male X Female
5. Age at time of adoption - before 6 months
6. Openness level of the adoption
 X closed/confidential
_____ mediated
_____ open/fully disclosed
7. Evidence that the adoptee feels that part of his/her 'self'
is missing because of the adoption?
"Who do you think she [Phoebe] takes after?' And it would hit
me with a little jolt that, as long as I lived, nobody was ever
going to ask that question about me." p. 12 "At New England
Children's Services, they knew who I was." p. 69 "...a gaping
hole at the very center of my being." p. 80 "For as long as I
could remember, I had secretly played the Mother Game." p. 131

8. Does the adoptee wonder about the physical appearance of his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
9. Does the adoptee decide to search for his/her birth family?
☒ yes ☐ no
10. Does the adoptee have doubts about meeting his/her birth family during the search?
☒ yes ☐ no
11. Is the search successful?
☒ yes ☐ no
12. Who does the adoptee consider his/her true family?
☒ adopted family ☐ birth family
13. In the conclusion of the book, does the adoptee maintain a relationship with his/her family members?
☐ adopted family only
☐ birth family only
☒ both families
☐ neither family

Appendix C

BOOKS USED IN STUDY

Aks, Patricia. (1983). The searching heart. New York: Fawcett Juniper.

Albright, Molly. (1988). Best friends. Mahwah, NJ: Troll Associates.

Baer, Judy. (1993). A special kind of love: Cedar River daydreams #21. Minneapolis: Bethany House.

Christopher, Matt. (1995). Double play at short. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Corcoran, Barbara. (1992). Family secrets. New York: Atheneum.

Covington, Vicki. (1990). Gathering home. New York: Penguin Books.

Derby, Pat. (1986). Visiting Miss Pierce. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Ferguson, Alane. (1997). Secrets. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Holland, Isabelle. (1991). The house in the woods. New York: Fawcett Juniper.

Johnson, Angela. (1998). Heaven. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kropp, Paul. (1996). Jo's search. New York: Collier Books.

Kent, Deborah. (1992). Why me? New York: Scholastic.

Lanham, Cheryl. (1997). Second best. New York: Berkley Books.

McDaniel, Lurlene. (1992). Mother, help me live. New York: Bantam Books.

Okimoto, Jean Davies. (1990). Molly by any other name. New York: Scholastic.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. (1991). Most precious blood. New York: Bantam Books.

Roper, Gayle. (1988). 7th grade soccer star. Elgin, Ill.: Chariot Books.

Tomey, Ingrid. (1996). The queen of dreamland. New York: Atheneum.

Viglucci, Pat Costa. (1987). Cassandra Robbins, Esq. Madison, Wis.: Square One Publishers.